

## Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-05 H-01 INR-07  
L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15  
USIA-06 /059 W  
-----126357 120822Z /13

R 111430Z JAN 78  
FM AMEMBASSY PRAGUE  
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 4480  
INFO AMEMBASSY BELGRADE  
AMEMBASSY BERLIN  
AMEMBASSY BUCHAREST  
AMEMBASSY MOSCOW  
AMEMBASSY BUDAPEST  
AMEMBASSY SOFIA  
AMEMBASSY WARSAW

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E.O. 11652: NA  
TAGS: PGOV, PINT, CZ  
SUBJECT: HUSAK'S 65TH BIRTHDAY AND RUMORED CRITICISM OF HIS  
LEADERSHIP.

1. PRESIDENT AND PARTY GENERAL SECRETARY HUSAK'S 65TH BIRTHDAY  
JANUARY 10 WAS CELEBRATED WITH ALL SOCIALIST POMP DUE TO A FIRST  
AMONG EQUALS. TOP LEADERSHIP OF PARTY, GOVERNMENT, PARLIAMENT AND  
NATIONAL FRONT ASSEMBLED IN PRAGUE CASTLE JANUARY 9 TO PRESENT  
HUSAK WITH THE ORDER OF THE REPUBLIC AND A CONGRATULATORY MESSAGE,  
THEN WENT ON TO TESTIMONIAL BANQUET. A STREAM OF DELEGATIONS FROM  
VARIOUS ORGANIZATIONS CALLED ON HUSAK JANUARY 10.

2. JANUARY 9 TV NEWS FEATURED THESE CEREMONIES AND SHOWED A  
FILM BIOGRAPHY CHRONICLING HUSAK'S LONG PARTY CAREER, BUT  
CONSPICUOUSLY IGNORING THE 1951-63 PERIOD BETWEEN HIS ARREST AND  
CONVICTION DURING THE PRAGUE SHOW TRIALS AND HIS EVENTUAL  
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REHABILITATION. ALL JANUARY 10 DAILY PAPERS DEVOTED MOST OF THEIR  
FRONT PAGES TO BIRTHDAY, INCLUDING REPORT ON SOVIET AWARD OF  
ORDER OF OCTOBER REVOLUTION. JANUARY 11 PRESS ENUMERATED THE  
CONGRATULATORY DELEGATIONS.

3. AT LAST MINUTE DIPLOMATIC CORPS WERE  
GIVEN OPPORTUNITY TO PAY RESPECTS TO HUSAK IN BRIEF CEREMONY

JANUARY 10.

4. SOVIET AMBASSADOR MATSKEVICH PARTICIPATED IN THAT CEREMONY, BUT ALSO PAID SEPARATE CALL ACCOMPANIED BY MEMBERS OF HIS EMBASSY STAFF AND COL. &3,. LITOVSTEV, SENIOR REPRESENTATIVE IN CZECHOSLOVAKIA OF WARSAW PACT SUPREME COMMANDER.

5. COMMENT: BASED ON OUR LIMITED RECORDS WE BELIEVE THE ONLY SIGNIFICANT DIFFERENCE BETWEEN CELEBRATION OF HUSAK'S 60TH AND 65TH BIRTHDAYS WAS THE INCLUSION THIS YEAR OF DIPLOMATIC CORPS IN STREAM OF VISITING DELEGATIONS. THERE IS SPECULATION HERE THAT THIS WAS ARRANGED HURRIEDLY TO COUNTER RUMORS NOW CIRCULATING ABOUT HUSAK'S HEALTH, HIS DESIRE TO RETIRE OR DIVEST HIMSELF OF ONE OF HIS JOBS, ETC.-- ALTHOUGH ONE SOURCE SAYS THE CALL WAS ARRANGED AT INSISTENCE OF SOME AMBASSADORS. LOCAL RUMORS HAVE RECENTLY COME TO FOCUS ON OCCASIONAL SIGNS OF FATIGUE SHOWN BY HUSAK AND ON EVENTS AT DECEMBER CENTRAL COMMITTEE PLENUM AT WHICH HUSAK ALLEGEDLY CAME UNDER FIRE FROM AT LEAST ONE CZECH DELEGATE FOR, DEPENDING ON THE SOURCE, ECONOMIC MISMANAGEMENT OR FAVORITISM SHOWN SLOVAKIA. ONE VERSION SAYS HUSAK BECAME SUFFICIENTLY UPSET TO OFFER TO RESIGN.

6. WE SEE NO REASON TO DOUBT THAT ECONOMIC STAGNATION AND ISSUE OF SPECIAL TREATMENT OF SLOVAKIA WERE DISCUSSED AT DECEMBER AND PREVIOUS PLENUMS, ALTHOUGH WE TEND TO THINK OTHER MEMBERS OF THE LEADERSHIP WOULD BE MORE VULNERABLE THAN HUSAK ON THE LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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STAGNATION ISSUE. IN ANY CASE, BIRTHDAY CELEBRATIONS SERVED TO SHOW HUSAK AS STILL FIRST IN THE HEARTS OF THE PRESIDUM MEMBERS AND, TO DIPLOMATIC CORPS, AS APPARENTLY TIRED BUT NOT VISIBLY UNHEALTHY.  
BYRNE

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## Message Attributes

**Automatic Decaptioning:** X  
**Capture Date:** 01 jan 1994  
**Channel Indicators:** n/a  
**Current Classification:** UNCLASSIFIED  
**Concepts:** POLITICAL STABILITY, POLITICAL LEADERS  
**Control Number:** n/a  
**Copy:** SINGLE  
**Draft Date:** 11 jan 1978  
**Decaption Date:** 01 jan 1960  
**Decaption Note:**  
**Disposition Action:** RELEASED  
**Disposition Approved on Date:**  
**Disposition Case Number:** n/a  
**Disposition Comment:** 25 YEAR REVIEW  
**Disposition Date:** 20 Mar 2014  
**Disposition Event:**  
**Disposition History:** n/a  
**Disposition Reason:**  
**Disposition Remarks:**  
**Document Number:** 1978PRAGUE00084  
**Document Source:** CORE  
**Document Unique ID:** 00  
**Drafter:** n/a  
**Enclosure:** n/a  
**Executive Order:** N/A  
**Errors:** N/A  
**Expiration:**  
**Film Number:** D780017-1117  
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**Message ID:** 073d8be4-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc  
**Office:** ACTION EUR  
**Original Classification:** LIMITED OFFICIAL USE  
**Original Handling Restrictions:** n/a  
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**Review Content Flags:**  
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**Review Event:**  
**Review Exemptions:** n/a  
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**Review Transfer Date:**  
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**Status:** NATIVE  
**Subject:** HUSAK'S 65TH BIRTHDAY AND RUMORED CRITICISM OF HIS LEADERSHIP.  
**TAGS:** PGOV, PINT, CZ, (HUSAK, GUSTAV)  
**To:** STATE  
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